

OUTCOMES

Fall
2020

Vol. 6, No. 1

BUILT FOR ITS TIME

State of Tennessee and MTSU combine funds
for a much-needed new academic building
for Behavioral and Health Sciences

ACADEMIC CLASSROOM BUILDING

**MIDDLE
TENNESSEE**
STATE UNIVERSITY

MIDDLE TENNESSEE

STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF BEHAVIORAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES

OUTCOMES

Fall
2020

Vol. 6, No. 1

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I AM *true*BLUE

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LETTER FROM THE DEAN



Dean Harold "Terry" Whiteside

More Ways to Help

Ten years ago this month I stood in front of the first-ever general faculty meeting for the College of Behavioral and Health Sciences. It was a packed house, literally standing room only. My first words were "We exist." I will never forget the roaring applause and cheers. President McPhee had decided to form a new college, placing six existing departments together into what we have marketed as the "helping college." We merged together smoothly and proceeded on our mission, becoming even more accomplished as we progressed.

This issue of *Outcomes* celebrates, with highlights, some of what all six units accomplished together and separately. Please read the magazine thoroughly and prepare to be impressed.

Our beautiful new building is a massive game-changer for three of our departments. The faculty offices of Criminal Justice Administration, Psychology, and Social Work have been housed separately with few labs and few classrooms. This made student-faculty interactions more difficult than any of us wanted. Now these departments are under one roof along with their advising center.

Student and faculty interactions will be maximized, clearly enhancing our already successful student success initiatives. Our labs will be state-of-the-art and will impact teaching, research, undergraduate and graduate student recruiting, and the retention and recruitment of outstanding faculty. Our abilities to have successful grant submissions also will be increased.

As you read this magazine, you will see how CBHS is already active and poised to contribute and lead when the unexpected happens. Nursing, Social Work, Psychology, and our Public Health program in the department of Health and Human Performance are involved in COVID-19 issues. Human Sciences is studying better nutrition and the new ways that we will be shopping for clothes. Criminal Justice Administration is dealing with homeland security and cybercrime. All of our units are poised to address and lead actions on social injustice.

CBHS is prepared to help people with the issues in their lives and communities. We are ready now and we will be ready tomorrow.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Harold D. Whiteside". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial 'H'.

Ready to Work

Just last year, MTSU was named one of the best places to earn an undergraduate degree in the nation by *The Princeton Review*, which called it “a go-to choice for those wishing to receive a quality and affordable education.”

It marked the first time—but I promise you, not the last—that MTSU was awarded a coveted spot in the review’s renowned guide, *The Best 385 Colleges*, an honor given to roughly 13% of the nation’s 3,000 or so four-year institutions. Only one other public institution in the state made the unranked list.

We are pleased that *The Princeton Review* recognizes the great quality and value of our academic programs and the wonderful quality of life and facilities found on our campus. It reflects not just the hard work of our faculty and staff in helping our students succeed, but also the more than \$1 billion in improvements and new construction put forward on our campus in the past decade.

The new Academic Classroom Building for our College of Behavioral and Health Sciences is the latest gem to be constructed on the MTSU campus. And its opening could not be happening at a better time for the University, the region, and, indeed, the world. Focused on our academic disciplines of Social Work, Psychology, and Criminal Justice Administration, the building represents a major new investment by MTSU and the state of Tennessee to produce new-age professionals to work in job fields squarely on the front lines of society’s most pressing issues—slowing the pandemic and hastening social justice reform.

The future graduates of these programs, who will study in this building, will no doubt go on to careers—many in middle Tennessee—where they will be able to provide new and better outcomes for our society. We at MTSU embrace that 79% of our graduates remain in Tennessee—and 56% stay within an hour’s drive of Nashville. One in five college graduates in greater Nashville holds an MTSU degree, making us the No. 1 provider to the region’s workforce. In all, MTSU has more than 64,000 alumni working across greater Nashville.

We are also proud of our many degree programs serving as a pipeline to middle Tennessee’s workforce needs. We at MTSU prepare ready-to-work graduates. And one key way we accomplish that is by ensuring that all facility planning at MTSU is done with an emphasis on students and with student success top of mind.

Join me in celebrating the opening of the new Academic Classroom Building for MTSU’s newest college!



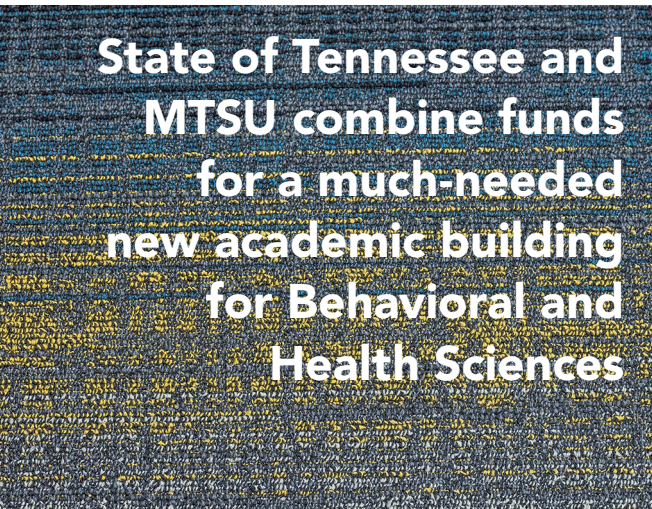
LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



President Sidney A. McPhee

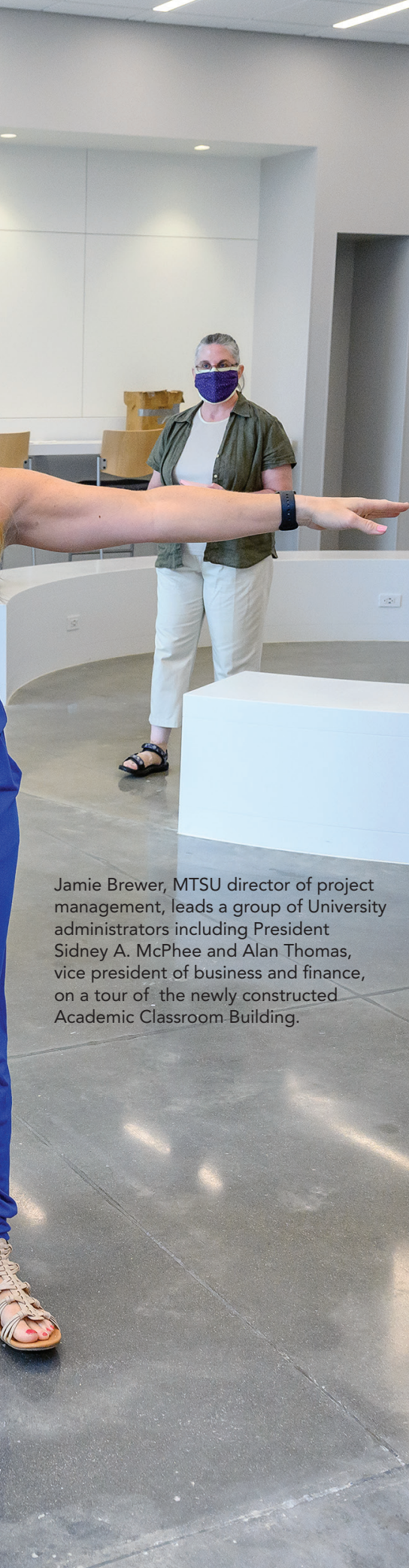


BUILT FOR ITS TIME



State of Tennessee and
MTSU combine funds
for a much-needed
new academic building
for Behavioral and
Health Sciences





Jamie Brewer, MTSU director of project management, leads a group of University administrators including President Sidney A. McPhee and Alan Thomas, vice president of business and finance, on a tour of the newly constructed Academic Classroom Building.

MTSU created the College of Behavioral and Health Sciences (CBHS) as part of an academic reorganization about a decade ago to better focus on preparing research-based service providers in the health and human sciences and to provide the best education in health, mental health, and human services in the state of Tennessee.

Graduates of the college are the caregivers who look after sick mothers and fathers in hospital beds. The counselors who care for brothers and sisters struggling with the transition from combat to the workplace. The dedicated administrators who work to prosecute and incarcerate those who wish to threaten our everyday happiness and even our lives. The researchers and creators who study the ways each of us can find greater health and fulfillment out of everyday life.

At their core, CBHS students and graduates are community servants. CBHS programs provide the next generation of nurses, social workers, criminal justice and corrections administrators, psychology counselors, and human science and health-related professionals who form the foundation for preserving and caring for humanity. In training and practice, CBHS graduates address problems that truly impact communities—especially among underserved populations.

At their core, CBHS students and graduates are community servants.

The six disciplines and departments that make up the college—Criminal Justice Administration (CJA), Health and Human Performance, Human Sciences, Nursing, Psychology, and Social Work—have long been part of MTSU's remarkable community impact, preparing front-line professionals who are essential to ensuring that communities thrive, especially now in a time of pandemic.

Now the college is taking the next step in its evolution, opening for classes this fall a brand-new \$39.6 million building.

The 91,000-square-foot building brings together three of the CBHS departments—CJA, Psychology, and Social Work—which offer highly related, integrative programs previously located in multiple buildings across campus, to allow for greater collaboration.

In his 2018–19 budget, former Gov. Bill Haslam recommended the new MTSU academic building among capital outlay projects for the state's public universities. The state committed \$35.1 million, and MTSU chipped in \$4.5 million to build—at long last—a state-of-the-art facility that offers critically needed classrooms, labs, and office space for these three departments.

The new Academic Classroom Building, located between the Student Union Building and the Tennessee Livestock Center, was designed by Bauer Askew. Turner Construction was the construction manager/general contractor for the project.

Here's a closer look at the new possibilities in store for MTSU's newest college as a result of this new Academic Classroom Building.

True Blue! [MTSU](#)

As long as there is crime, there will be a need for the criminal justice system. Whether in the punishment, confinement, and rehabilitation of perpetrators or in helping victims pursue justice, MTSU's Criminal Justice Administration program offers preparation for entering and advancing among the ranks of the industry's professionals. Graduates have become lawyers, police officers, corrections officials, and more.

mtsu.edu/criminaljustice



Department of Criminal Justice Middle Tennessee State University

JUSTICE FOR ALL

New academic building that houses MTSU's Criminal Justice Administration is designed to grapple with modern-day realities

MTSU's \$39.6 million Academic Classroom Building, the new home of the Department of Criminal Justice Administration, is a timely project given the world we live in today.

In the midst of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, as well as nationwide social unrest in the wake of police brutality along racial lines, academic work that will take place in the new building could have far-reaching positive impacts on society as a whole.

"The new building symbolizes growth for our respective departments and college, and our part of our growth is demonstrated in how we as a college, even during a pandemic, continue to look forward to the future," CJA Interim Chair Lee Wade said.

"Moreover, we also will have several meeting spaces in our facility that can host community discussions, events for impactful social justice speakers, and collaboration with faculty from our three departments to impact students who will become future leaders in the justice system."

Given the challenges currently facing America's criminal justice system, college and university programs have a clear role to play in making a difference in the social justice sphere. Many are grappling with what might be missing from the current curriculum of CJA students that could hasten systemic change. Organizing new collaborations with departments of Psychology, Social Work, History, and Sociology and Anthropology to round out student perspectives on social issues could prove beneficial for current and future CJA students. Such cross-disciplinary study, featuring open and honest discussions about crime rate discrepancies, racial and ethnic biases, excessive force, the role of police, and institutional racism, may well become essential components of updated CJA degree programs preparing law enforcement professionals to better serve the communities they police.

With its brand-new, collaborative facility opening for Fall 2020, MTSU is positioned to be a leader in higher education's response to justice-related issues.

A BIGGER FOOTPRINT

The scope of the CJA program at MTSU is expanding, though, even beyond the issues dominating 2020 headlines. According to the former chair, Lance Selva, “We’re going beyond traditional criminal justice. . . . We’re expanding into homeland security, emergency management, . . . predictive analytics. . . . We’re talking about new technologies capable of securing the United States.”

In addition, the new facility has a command center where CJA students can practice coordinating and mobilizing resources when disasters strike.



“We’ll be getting into . . . disaster-relief management, too. We’ll be bringing in experts to help our professors teach the latest methods of coordinating resources . . . [and how] to run simulation scenarios involving various disasters,” Selva said.

“We’ll have . . . an emergency-simulation room with 28 computers, multiple projectors, and four 80-inch monitors. . . . This will be hands-on learning, not abstract learning.”

Speaking of experiential learning, MTSU currently places CJA interns with more than 30 criminal agencies, including district attorneys’ and public defenders’ offices; police and sheriffs’ departments; probation and parole offices; circuit, juvenile, and drug courts; and several state and federal level agencies. Students not only experience the pragmatic operations of the criminal justice system but also the applications of theory to the profession.

The overall 91,000-square-foot building offers amenities that were unimaginable in previous departmental configurations. But just how badly was it needed?

Throughout most of the 1970s, the precursor to MTSU’s Center for Historic Preservation operated out of the second story of an old house on East Main Street, retrofitted to accommodate academic offices. At the bottom of the creaky, otherwise unremarkable stairs, were the offices for the CJA program.

“We operated out of the bedrooms on the ground floor,” Selva said.

Right about the time Ronald Reagan moved into the White House, Mother Nature served up enough rain and wind to force Selva, his CJA colleagues, and their history-minded peers upstairs to relocate.

“The irony is not lost on me that the roof above the historic preservation department upstairs caved in, forcing us from that historic, old building,” Selva quipped.

Nobody was hurt, and the respective offices would soon find temporary new spaces, and eventually permanent homes. Well, sort of.

“The Department of Criminal Justice Administration, as well as the Department of Psychology, were located in Jones Hall,” Selva said, with a bemusement that conveyed an unapologetic lack of enthusiasm for the space. To his credit, the words also conveyed a practical reality rather a petty complaint.

“We were literally in dormitory rooms. I was separated from my administrative aide by an entire floor. We truly had no space, and there was simply no direct contact. It was not conducive for much,” he explained. “What served as our conference room can’t even hold my faculty—six of them had to stand up when we were all in there. So I held my faculty conferences in the dining room of my home—it’s twice as big.”

Wade, the new interim chair, summed it up by saying the positive impact for CJA students in the new Academic Classroom Building “is having convenience and consolidation of faculty and staff for them.”

“Some of the convenience for students is having access to the latest technology resources in the building, especially on the third floor, which houses many computer labs and research labs,” Wade said. “All floors have modern classrooms, student collaborative spaces, and access to faculty. Also, faculty and advisors are both available in the same building to help mentor students towards academic achievement.”

Sounds like a recipe for some much-needed societal solutions. [MTSU](#)



AMONG THE BEST IN THE U.S.

MTSU's Department of Criminal Justice Administration already boasts a top-ranked program nationally. The new Academic Classroom Building only stands to swell its profile.

MTSU was ranked in 2019 as having one of the best online bachelor's degree programs in criminal justice across the country, according to TheBestSchools.org. The website, which tries to connect prospective students with available online degree programs, reviewed all accredited online criminal justice bachelor's degree programs in the U.S. to select the top 50 programs nationally.

Top programs were selected based on curriculum quality, faculty excellence, rankings, awards, and each school's reputation for providing quality online degrees. Ranked No. 37, MTSU's program offers an online Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice Administration, with support from University College.

MTSU was one of only two Tennessee universities on the list, the other being Bryan College (No. 40).



PROOF IN THE PUDDING

CJA boasts many prominent alums, and there will no doubt be more in the pipeline as a result of the construction of the new Academic Classroom Building for MTSU's College of Behavioral and Health Sciences.

One alumnus was recently personally invited by the president of the United States to participate in a national symposium. CJA graduate Monty Burks, who was featured on the cover of a previous edition of *Outcomes*, joined President Donald Trump at the podium at the Rx Drug Abuse and Heroin Summit in April 2019 in Atlanta. Burks, director of Faith-Based Initiatives/Division of Substance Abuse at the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, was previously the keynote speaker for the Indiana Minority Health Conference in Indianapolis. President Trump introduced Burks, whose remarks aired on C-SPAN.

Another MTSU alumnus was recently named one of only six scholars in history to receive all three top awards from the American Academy of Criminal Justice. J. Mitchell Miller, who earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in Criminal Justice Administration from MTSU in 1990 and 1991, respectively, was selected for the ACJS Founder's Award, which is presented for "outstanding service to ACJS and the profession." Miller is a professor in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of North Florida in Jacksonville.



MODERN JUSTICE

Associate Professor Ben Stickle is just one example of a CJA faculty member who will benefit (and whose students will benefit) from the \$39.6 million Academic Classroom Building.

Stickle recently co-authored the first known academic study of "porch piracy," the theft of delivered packages from outside people's homes while they are away. Stickle also authored a recent research paper in the *American Journal of Criminal Justice* reconsidering the way crime statistics are analyzed as a result of changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Stickle posited that the novel coronavirus tragedy presents a unique opportunity for a "randomized control trial." He advocates considering crime data from the onset of the pandemic in terms of time periods that correspond to lifestyle differences.

"How we spend our time, our routine activities, is really what's shifted," Stickle said. "The typical ways that we research crime and break things down don't really apply anymore."

Last but not least, in a great example of inter-professional collaboration, Stickle and Social Work Professor Vicki Harden were recently awarded \$166,000 from Rutherford County for their role in the Keeping Family Connections Project funded through the U.S. Department of Justice to address the needs of incarcerated parents and their children.





“Why did I say that?” “What made him do that?” Psychology, which studies mental functions and behaviors, may not have all the answers, but it’s a science that’s constantly seeking them while exploring connections to other areas of study such as medicine, philosophy, chemistry, biology, and the social sciences. Psychology reaches into multiple areas of human activity—from the workplace to schools, and research hospitals to forensic investigation—as those trained in the field strive to understand and serve human needs.

mtsu.edu/psychology

Department of Psychology Middle Tennessee State University

ROOM TO GROW

MTSU's new \$39.6 million academic building will allow Psychology students to truly open their minds

The Department of Psychology at MTSU offers three majors leading to the Bachelor of Science, six minors, five master's degree programs, and an Ed.S. in School Psychology. It presently serves approximately 1,000 undergraduate majors and nearly 200 graduate students.

Students following those academic tracks will soon begin benefitting from studying in the College of Behavioral and Health Sciences' \$39.6 million new Academic Classroom Building.

For Psychology, the building provides critically needed classrooms, offices, and lab space for programs, including:

- EEG, eye tracker, and whisper rooms for neuroscience, sensation and perception, and cognitive research
- computer labs specifically for teaching undergraduate and graduate statistics, as well as other data collection
- dedicated labs for collecting questionnaire and other data

The building opens at a time of great social unrest in America stemming from both the global pandemic outbreak and ongoing protests for needed social change in America. Amidst that landscape, MTSU Psychology students who will soon populate the building will work toward degrees in academic areas crucial to America's current and future mental health.

One of the most challenging circumstances of living in a pandemic is the wide variance of individual psychological reactions to the virus. Think store shelves emptied of hand sanitizer and toilet paper, or a plunging stock market resulting from nervous investors. Contrast that image with one of individuals who view the virus as a hoax or run-of-the-mill virus and refuse to wear a mask. All are psychological reactions to threats—real, perceived, or dismissed—that have gripped a nation.

The barrage of news and information about the virus can sometimes confuse more than elucidate. Given common misconceptions about COVID-19 or confusion over what constitutes scientific fact versus what is sheer speculation, is it any wonder



people are experiencing fear and anxiety? And that fear and anxiety, some mental health experts warn, may be more dangerous than the coronavirus itself.

Helping people understand how their own mind and thoughts work is essential to making good decisions and having good judgement about any issue, whether it be the coronavirus spread, social unrest, or climate change, for that matter. Untangling it all falls to educated professionals and clinicians in the field of psychology who can help people deal with this “new normal.”

Which is to say that MTSU’s big investment in the study of psychology is a timely one, to say the least.

MIND OVER MATTER

Prior to the opening of this building, MTSU Psychology faculty taught in classrooms spread across campus while their offices were in Jones Hall. Psychology students previously had a closet-size testing room that doubled as storage space for files and videos.

Given such realities, it wouldn’t have been a surprise if in the past departmental leaders and students alike might have had cause to from time to time kick their feet up on a therapy sofa and offload some woe—if only their cinder-block quarters had offered space for a divan.

Greg Schmidt, department chair, will be happy to have his faculty and students all in a central location as well.

“We also had a classroom in the Alumni Memorial Gym that’s below the volleyball courts while most of our classes have been in the College of Education and Business and Aerospace buildings,” he said. “This makes informal meetings to continue class discussions or to follow up on research interests very rare.

“In addition to our offices being in the same building as our classrooms, the new building has large and small spaces for students to spend time before and after class. We anticipate these will facilitate the kind of impromptu meetings and informal discussions [among students or between students and faculty] that deepen the learning experience.

“Dedicated lab space and labs in the same building will allow for more research, which means more undergraduates and graduate students involved in research,” Schmidt added.

As such, MTSU students will be the ones who realize the most tangible benefits offered by the facility.

The new, interconnected building will make it easier for students in Psychology, Criminal Justice Administration (CJA), and Social Work to be familiar with and locate their professors to seek help with coursework and professional advising. Students in all three disciplines also will have much better access to spaces outside of class that will facilitate their interaction with each other and with faculty—and give them a better opportunity to be comfortable as they meet, read, study, and relax before and between classes.

“Psychology exposes students to—and we have always had—many courses covering personal perception, stereotyping, prejudice, and racism,” CBHS Dean Harold “Terry” Whiteside said. “This is not new to us, and we are poised to provide leadership and action on social injustice.”

In today’s world, such a collaborative environment will be ripe with opportunities for innovation and solution creation for society’s current and seemingly intractable problems. At a time of great upheaval in America and around the world, that sounds like a worthy goal. [MTSU](#)

I, O . . . MTSU!

One MTSU Psychology program that prepares graduates to make workplaces better places to work has received top performance reviews from its industry's pre-eminent professional group.

The Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, the premier professional organization in the field,

ranked MTSU's Industrial/Organizational Psychology master's program as No. 1 overall in the nation in 2018.

Industrial/organizational psychology (also known as I/O psychology or work psychology) is the scientific study of employees, workplaces, and organizations. Industrial and organizational psychologists contribute to an organization's success by improving the workplace and the performance, satisfaction, and well-being of its people. The significance of the ranking is heightened by the fact that I/O psychology is

currently the fastest growing occupation in the country, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

MTSU's I/O program is affiliated with the Center for Organizational and Human Resource Effectiveness (COHRE), an independent consulting unit on campus that offers valuable experience to MTSU's I/O Psychology students and industry clients like State Farm and Cracker Barrel, among others.

COHRE's goal is to help organizations meet their human resources and organizational development needs—improving the lives of people and the effectiveness of organizations—by drawing upon the expertise and experience of MTSU faculty, graduate project associates, and consultants. Projects range from small, round-table workshops to multi-year efforts that take advantage of vast faculty and associate resources. COHRE also serves as a focal point for coordinating graduate internships, class projects, and applied research. COHRE provides a high-profile avenue for creating consulting partnerships between the business world and graduate students and faculty of the program.

CYBER-PSYCH

Among America's Psychology bachelor's degree programs that are available online, collegechoice.net places MTSU 30th in the nation.



According to the website, rankings are based equally on quality, reputation, affordability, value, and satisfaction. Analytical components include the U.S. Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, industry-specific journals, and student satisfaction websites.

College Choice specializes in online resources to help students conduct and complete their college search, including its student-centered college rankings.

MTSU's 38-hour Psychology major can be completed totally online.

YOU TALKING TO YOU?

If you talk to yourself, you're not alone.

While that might sound like a classic aphorism from insightful "philosophers" Yogi Berra and Casey Stengel, it's actually a psychological reality. Talking to oneself isn't unusual, nor necessarily a sign of mental illness.

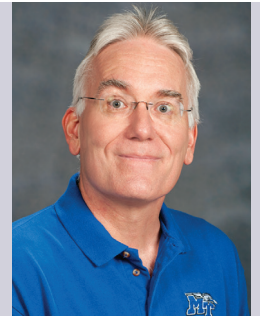
MTSU Psychology Professor Thomas Brinthaup maintains there are situations in which self-talk can be beneficial, such as attempting to remember something, trying to make a decision, expressing emotions, finding a solution to a problem, or facing a new challenge.


"The same areas of the brain light up when we talk internally as when we talk externally," Brinthaup said.

He notes children around age 2 to 3 talk to themselves or to stuffed animals or other imaginary playmates as part of normal development.

The professor and his students conduct studies on dissociative experiences and self-talk. Dissociation can range from daydreaming to dissociative identity disorder (formerly "multiple personality disorder").

Brinthaup says two different hypotheses have emerged from using the Self-Talk Scale. "Social isolation" theory posits that individuals who spend more time alone or have more socially isolating experiences talk to themselves more. "Cognitive disruption" theory asserts that individuals who experience disordered thinking engage in more self-talk.





The practice of social work is the professional activity of counseling individuals, families, and groups to obtain services, enhance or restore social functioning, promote well-being, accomplish life tasks, realize aspirations and values, and alleviate distress. At its root is a quest for social and economic justice, the prevention of conditions that limit human rights, the elimination of poverty, and the enhancement of the quality of life for all persons.

mtsu.edu/socialwork

Department of Social Work Middle Tennessee State University

A SOCIAL GATHERING

New CBHS building, now home to MTSU Social Work, was designed with public outreach in mind

Faculty, students and staff in the Department of Social Work are looking forward to their new, cohesive home in MTSU's \$39.6 million Academic Classroom Building opening for the Fall 2020 semester.

Cathy McElderry, department chair, said MTSU Social Work students and faculty are "energized and excited" about the critically needed classroom space the new building will afford.

"All Social Work classes will be offered in one facility," McElderry said.

"In addition to concentrating faculty in one location, the innovative classrooms and laboratories will accommodate new models of teaching in the state-of-the-art facility.

"A unique feature of the new space is that Social Work will have a dedicated space on the second floor to conduct simulated clinical interviews based on individual and family scenarios."

The new facility also houses the promise of greater research in the field emanating from the MTSU campus. The labs McElderry references will be key to the proper collection of questionnaire responses and other data. Others will be used for teaching data collection to both undergraduates and graduates.

"Student-faculty undergraduate research will grow astronomically," said Harold "Terry" Whiteside, dean of the College of Behavioral and Health Sciences. "Graduate research and faculty research also will be enhanced."

THE TIME IS NOW

Whiteside's promise of enhanced research comes as a welcomed proclamation in the field. So too does MTSU's overall investment in the occupation, upon which our society so heavily depends.

Nationally, the need for child and family social workers continues to rise. The Bureau of Labor Statistics has estimated that job openings in the field were projected to grow 10%-14% during 2014–26. No doubt those estimates are on the rise now as the economy stagnates, unemployment rises, and social unrest stemming from both the COVID-19 pandemic and racial justice protests continue. Social workers are suddenly in the nationwide spotlight as the essential workers they have always been.

As just one example, social workers are increasingly being pegged as crucial partners in the effort to contact trace people who have contracted the COVID-19 virus. By identifying these people and interviewing them about their activities and others who might have been exposed, contact tracers can keep the public safe by slowing the spread of the virus. School-based social workers in particular also will be key to helping fight the pandemic as public schools reopen nationwide.

Similarly, the national push to at long last address systemic racism in our society increases the gravity of the work Social Work students are conducting to gain knowledge and apply what they learn in service. To eradicate racism, social workers will be called upon more and more as researchers, educators, service providers, and administrators to identify and fight injustice they encounter on a daily basis.

McElderry strongly posits her department's primary role in addressing these issues. "Given the current state of social unrest in the U.S., it is imperative that social scientists offer their collective expertise to address the problems of racism, poverty, police brutality, and mass incarceration to improve outcomes and well-being for all citizens," she said.

Having a new and adequate space to accommodate inter-professional collaboration between the Social Work, Psychology, and the Criminal Justice Administration departments is also critical to accomplishing such outcomes, McElderry said.

"The CHBS is fortunate to have a number of nationally renowned scholars who are positioned to move the conversation forward locally, regionally, and nationally. The [new building] will facilitate this type of dialogue and collaboration," she said. "It is not unusual for these disciplines to share common interests in resolving social problems."

The six core values of the social work profession are service, social justice, dignity and worth of the individual, importance and centrality of human relationships, integrity, and competence. MTSU's Social Work program relies on those same core values. And, considering the world we live in today, those values have never been more near or dear to our society. MTSU's bold investment in the education of its Social Work students is a testament to the University's commitment to the social good. [MTSU](#)



LEARNING BY DOING

Field experience is an essential part of both the Social Work bachelor's and master's programs. The degree plan includes internships in an agency setting, allowing students to combine classroom learning with real-world experience. Through such real-life practice, the MTSU Department of Social Work prepares graduates to tackle the most challenging problems of our time.

For instance, in recent years, undergraduates have worked with the city of Murfreesboro and the Homeless Alliance of Rutherford County on a "one-stop" concept offering many types of assistance. The study recommended that social service agencies coordinate their resources into a centralized campus designed to more effectively and conveniently help individuals with getting into affordable, permanent housing.

PUBLIC BEST



MTSU's Bachelor of Social Work program ranked No. 5 out of 12 CSWE-accredited programs in the state for Best B.S.W. (based on salaries of graduates) by SocialWorkDegree.org. The program was also the highest-ranked among Tennessee public institutions.

The MTSU Master of Social Work program was rated No. 2 most affordable out of five master's programs accredited in Tennessee.

LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD



Women have made great strides in the workplace. Despite those achievements, women are still vastly underrepresented in corporate and government leadership roles as well as in cutting-edge fields such as technology and science. Women also experience a significant wage gap, earning only 79 cents on the dollar compared to men with equal qualifications. This gap especially affects women with several academic degrees and is largest for women of color.

For her work uplifting women throughout her career, MTSU Social Work Professor Carmelita L. Dotson was selected as the 2020 Tempest Award honoree by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) Murfreesboro branch. The award is given annually to an individual in middle Tennessee who has acted to address the systemic barriers to equity for women and girls and thereby has contributed to the mission to level the playing field in education and the workplace.

Dotson "has facilitated a female student group for eight years, supported community service events that were focused on women and girls, and encouraged female students to seek leadership positions and scholarships," CBHS Associate Dean Barbara Turnage said. Dotson was scheduled to be honored with the Tempest Award at the fourth annual Equal-Tea in March at MTSU's Student Union Ballroom, but the event was postponed due to the COVID-19 crisis. The annual social fundraiser and educational program raises scholarship funds for MTSU college women students.

FRESH PERSPECTIVES



Nikki Jones, an assistant professor of Social Work, was one of two CBHS faculty members to be designated Influential Faculty in Fall 2019, along with Kathleen Darby.

Jones is the author of *Lyric and Blake*, a novel about two African American female junior high school students who defy gender norms by wearing boys' clothes and dating girls. The book follows how they explore personal identity among judgmental student cliques.

Jones' novel aims to present characters with a strong sense of self who could be exemplars for young people grappling with sexual identity issues. "It was very deliberate for me to make sure that I create characters who were self-assured . . . because they had a strong family network," Jones said. "In so much of middle school fiction you see children with low self-esteem issues, children who are battling bullying, and things like that."

In addition, Jones is concerned with the impact of sleep deprivation on low-income children of color. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine maintains that African American youth have shorter sleep durations and more sleep fragmentation than other children.

"Living in a hostile community where there may be a lot of crime, lights, and sirens can contribute to sleep deprivation," Jones said. "In addition to that, there are familial factors—a parent being out of the home and not being able to provide sleep routines or living in a home where there's a lot of noise."



TOP 10 FACTS

ABOUT THE NEW HOME OF THE COLLEGE OF BEHAVIORAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES

- 1** 91,200 square feet of new construction (similar in size, scope, and scale to MTSU's nearby College of Education Building)
- 2** \$39,600,000 total project cost
- 3** Located in the campus academic core north of the College of Education Building and the main MTSU Boulevard
- 4** 14 total classrooms (three large-tiered, 11 traditional) and five computer class labs, adding a total of 900 class and class lab seats in the building, plus 14 smaller, discipline-specific testing and research rooms with an additional 87 student stations
- 5** Expected enrollment increases by MTSU in the three relocating programs to match institutional enrollment over the next decade







6

1.5% annual average job growth predicted for all three relocating academic disciplines the next seven years, indicating a strong increase in demand (11.7% CJA, 11.8% SW, and 15.8% PSY) for these program graduates in Tennessee and nationally

7

Overcomes 47,500-square-foot previous deficit in overall academic space (classroom and class labs, open labs, and faculty offices) for the college's needs

8

"Surge" space created by building's opening providing consolidated space for the College of Liberal Arts in one neighborhood vicinity and necessary relocation space for the College of Media and Entertainment labs in Ezell Hall (scheduled for future demolition)







9

First recognized as a priority project in MTSU's 2008 Master Plan and further refined in the 2016 Master Plan with the final selected site; submitted as a top priority project in MTSU's 2012 capital outlay submission and placed on TBR's priority outlay project list; moved up to No. 3 on TBR's priority list for FY 2017-18; project submitted to the State Building Commission June 2016 for full planning with the use of plant funds and approved

10

Bauer Askew architectural firm appointed by the State Building Commission as designer and Turner Construction as general contractor



NEXT, BUT NOT LEAST

Three other crucial disciplines make up MTSU's College of Behavioral and Health Sciences: Nursing, Health and Human Performance, and Human Sciences.

While those departments may not be moving into the new Academic Classroom Building, they certainly continue to be an academic force for good, providing new and better outcomes for middle Tennesseans.

The following pages provide a brief but recent glimpse of some of the good works happening in those departments as well.



Photo by Attila Barabas/123RF

mtsu.edu/nursing

School of **NURSING**

Nursing is more than a degree. And it is more than a job. It's a calling. The most honored and trusted profession in the world, nursing represents the most immediate and most human component of our health care delivery system. It is a nurse's job to be there for those in pain and suffering as well as those in fear of what lies ahead. Anyone who has ever been sick and hospitalized knows that a compassionate, competent, selfless nurse with a respect for a patient's dignity is nothing short of heaven-sent.

Here are some recent updates from the MTSU School of Nursing that portray the sizeable impact the program has on middle Tennessee.

RESPONDING TO THE CALL

Some MTSU Nursing students did their part to help Tennesseans survive the coronavirus outbreak. About 25 MTSU students helped staff the Tennessee Department of Health's COVID-19 hotline, available 10 a.m.–10 p.m. Central time seven days a week. They sat 6 feet apart, supplied with information and antiseptic wipes, at the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency Command Center in Nashville.

The students, clad in their clinical scrubs and lab coats, provided callers from throughout the state with available facts and tried to dispel rumors, misinformation, and disinformation. The MTSU volunteers were students in Assistant Professor Barbara Lancaster's community/public health nursing course. "What better experience could they have!" Lancaster said. "I'm very proud of them."



PROTECT AND SERVE



Student veteran Martinna Young, a Nursing major who graduated in May, was the inaugural member of the Ascension Saint Thomas Nursing Corps, a partnership with MTSU that seeks to create a robust pipeline of strong registered nurse candidates who are also military veterans.

Young, 31, who served eight years in the U.S. Air Force, is married and the mother of three children ages 9 and younger. She juggled nursing classes and clinicals her last semester along with being a patient care tech nursing intern with Saint Thomas West in Nashville.

With hospital and University officials looking on, Young signed with Ascension/Saint Thomas Health in a special ceremony Nov. 26, 2019, at MTSU's Charlie and Hazel Daniels Veterans and Military Family Center.

The Nursing Corps is a collaboration between Ascension Saint Thomas and MTSU's Daniels Center and School of Nursing. The Daniels Center will direct student veterans early in their academic career to the Nursing Corps for work opportunities and paid internships with the eventual goal of being hired upon graduation and successful completion of the National Council Licensure Examination.

LINE OF FIRE

MTSU alumna and nurse Brianne Knight, a 2017 graduate from Selmer, worked in the intensive care unit of a Queens hospital during the early period of the coronavirus outbreak. Her last permanent ICU position was in Texas at Memorial Hermann Medical Center in Houston. In order to address the virus in one of its hot spots, Knight accepted a travel assignment to New York City.



Equipped with only one floor designed to handle ICU patients, the Queens facility had to convert two additional floors to ICUs, she said. Since the other two floors had been medical surgical floors, Knight said they didn't afford the same functions as the regular ICU.

"For example, in ICU, your patient becomes hypotensive [low blood pressure] and bradycardic [low heart rate]" Knight told MTSUNews.com. "Your ICU monitor will alert you. On those two specific floors, you do not have the capability of monitoring your patients. We have to physically go in the room every 15 minutes to make sure they're still alive."

Knight said one patient can be on as many as 10 intravenous drips simultaneously, which easily could be multiplied by four or five patients. Some days all patients were not in the same room. Other days, all four patients she cared for were in the same room. A normal patient-to-nurse ratio is 2:1. At the hospital where Knight worked, the ratio was 4:1 or 5:1.

"It's very tough to take care of that many critically ill patients," Knight said during her stint. "The good thing is that there are more brave travel nurses coming in to help."

HAILING A HERO

Brittany Marks, an adjunct professor with MTSU's Master of Science in Nursing (M.S.N.) program, was recently hailed as a health care hero in a network television special.



Country Music Television featured Marks in *CMT Celebrates Our Heroes*, a two-hour simulcast that debuted June 3 on CMT, Paramount Network, Pop TV, and TV Land. On the program, celebrity singers and musicians paid musical tributes to the professionals on the front lines in the fight against the novel coronavirus.

Marks earned her master's degree from MTSU in 2014. She is a family nurse practitioner who teaches the clinical component of some of the University's nurse practitioner courses online. A friend recommended her to CMT through a network contact, and the network sent a crew to interview her. CMT and Kellogg's donated \$10,000 to Feeding America in Marks' name.

"While I do not consider myself a hero—just doing my job and grateful to take care of patients—I think they found it most interesting that I am helping care for some of the high-risk people living with diabetes in middle Tennessee during such a scary time for them," Marks said.

CONTINUING THE LEGACY



During the 2020–21 academic year, MTSU's Master of Science in Nursing (M.S.N.) program is introducing a revised Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) and a Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing Practitioner (PMHNP) concentration.



Department of mtsu.edu/healthhumanperf **HEALTH AND HUMAN PERFORMANCE**

The Department of Health and Human Performance (HHP) prepares students for professional careers as teachers of health and of physical education, directors in industry and social agencies, recreation and leisure service professionals in a wide range of settings, and health and fitness professionals in schools, industry, and allied areas. Areas of concentration include Athletic Training, Community and Public Health, Exercise Science, Leisure and Sport Management, Physical Education, Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology, and Tourism and Hospitality Management.

Here are some recent updates from the department that portray the sizeable impact the program has on middle Tennessee and beyond.

WALKING ON WATER

Ongoing research being conducted at the MTSU Exercise Science laboratory by Sandy Stevens, an associate professor and postdoctoral researcher, is helping people with paralysis to walk again.

Under Stevens' care and watchful research eye, individuals with spinal cord injuries who are training in an underwater treadmill are able to stand and support themselves and are taking steps toward a new beginning.

Almost all participants reported greater independence, better general health, and improved mental well-being.

"We have participants who have come to MTSU from other states because there is nothing similar," Stevens said. "When the participants see their legs moving, they believe that anything is possible."



BUILDING BRIDGES

MTSU's Exercise Science program was recently awarded a three-year sub-grant partnering with Western Kentucky University beginning this past spring.

The project allows WKU to partner with faculty and students to implement Bingosize in 40 certified nursing facilities. Bingosize, an exercise program for older adults developed around bingo, features frequent intermissions for simple exercises to improve balance and range of motion—such as reaching upward or rotating wrists or ankles.

The program, which provides an opportunity for MTSU students to gain the tools needed to positively impact the lives of older adults in long-term care, is in use in more than 30 states across the U.S., as well as in Poland and England.



A CRUCIAL ROLE



Chandra Story, an MTSU Community and Public Health associate professor, was selected recently as a point person to disseminate information to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in communities of color as a member of a statewide task force.

The Office of Minority Health, a division of the Tennessee Department of Health, appointed Story to the statewide health disparities task force.

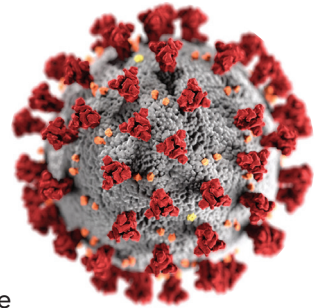


"I'm passionate about minority health, specifically African Americans and women," Story said.

The task force exists to "improve the efficiency and effectiveness of disseminating information to communities" and "examine existing data, monitor trends, and hear from those living in, working in, and serving our communities to generate responsive solutions and policies to reduce those disparities."

Data indicate that black and brown communities are disproportionately affected adversely by the COVID-19 pandemic. Story said chronic disease compounds the impact of COVID-19 among communities of color.

"I have family members, friends, and students impacted by the effects of chronic disease and a care system that does not always respond adequately to communities of color," Story said. "The disparities are highlighted during this epidemic, so I am pleased to be part of the solution."



Other stakeholders on the task force include state Sen. Brenda Gilmore, diverse representatives from nonprofits and faith-based communities, faith-based mental health area coordinators from the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and other university representatives.

EXPERT TEAMWORK

Some budding athletic trainers studying at MTSU recently earned their way into the finals of a national tournament to show how much they know about their major.

MTSU's team won the Southeast Athletic Training Association's Quiz Bowl in early February at the organization's 35th annual student symposium in Atlanta. The group defeated 17 other teams from Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Kentucky, and Mississippi.

This is the first victory in the nine years MTSU has competed in the regional Quiz Bowl, and it is the first-ever victory by a Tennessee team. The MTSU students advanced to the National Athletic Training Association's annual competition to face the rest of the country's brightest Athletic Training majors in a test of their knowledge. Those finals were delayed due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

MTSU's team members faced challenges in categories such as anatomy, psychomotor skills, musculoskeletal conditions, fractures, and just about any situation professional athletic trainers could encounter.

The contest's format resembled that of the *Jeopardy* TV game show.

"It shows them, 'Yes, I did actually learn something in class,' and it shows them areas where they need to go back and study again," said Helen Binkley, an associate professor and director of MTSU's Athletic Training program.

In addition to the opportunity for students to exhibit and improve their knowledge, the Quiz Bowl and the symposium provide a showcase for the profession of athletic training.

"Athletic training is a medical profession that is recognized by the American Medical Association," Binkley said. "We take care of athlete and physically active patient populations, preventing injuries and [caring for them] from the time they're injured through the entire rehabilitation process."

In addition to sports, Binkley said professions which have need for athletic trainers include the performing arts, first responders, physician's offices, the military, and industries.



Department of **HUMAN SCIENCES**

Department of Human Sciences disciplines apply scientific principles to enhance well-being and improve quality of life, wrestling with issues that impact the human condition and the challenges we face as individuals, families, and communities. Encompassing Family and Consumer Studies, Interior Design, Nutrition and Food Science, and Textiles, Merchandising, and Design, graduates in these fields of study provide solutions to everyday concerns and challenges.

Here are some recent updates from the department that portray the sizeable impact the program has on middle Tennessee and beyond.



MS. WORLDWIDE

Human Sciences Professor Sandra Poirier's recent visit to the United Nations will help her enlighten students about the impact of homelessness on society at home and abroad.

Poirier, a part of the Nutrition and Food Science faculty, attended the 58th session of the UN's Commission for Social Development in February 2019 in New York. The priority theme was "Affordable Housing and Social Protection Systems for All to Address Homelessness."

"Just being there was a real career highlight for me because I've been [interested in] this field ever since I was in the eighth grade," Poirier said.

In nine days of panel discussions, forums, debates, and other events related to the theme, Poirier and her colleagues examined the issue through the lenses of poverty, climate change, income inequality, global conflict, and the need for worldwide partnerships.

"It just really deepened my understanding of the issue, brought up topics that I really had not thought about before, and enriched me as a person so that I can also help to weave some of these things into the courses I teach," Poirier said.

With colleagues from Kentucky and Ontario, Canada, Poirier wrote a statement about homelessness on behalf of the Germany-based International Federation for Home Economics, a nongovernmental organization. The statement was submitted to the UN commission.

"I learned a lot about other countries and what has happened to them, how some of them have moved backwards," Poirier said. "One girl from Jordan told me how she had come to the United States to study . . . how she had to go through this metamorphosis to fit into this society."

Poirier has spent a third of her career working internationally in places including Austria, Pakistan, India,



Sandra Poirier (l) with colleagues

Japan, Iceland, Poland, Canada, Thailand, and the Middle East.

"We are a global society, and we need to think that way," Poirier said.

CLOSE-KNIT RELATIONSHIP



Nashville Fashion Week—a major industry event for fashionistas all across America—went virtual in 2020 due to the coronavirus outbreak. MTSU's Textiles,

Merchandising, and Design program partners with the international festival each year.

Student volunteers not only have the opportunity to attend Nashville Fashion Week but to mix and mingle with professionals in the global fashion industry as well. The experience gives students a chance to be seen and heard by all of the designers that they have dreamed of impressing, like Fern Mallis, who began New York Fashion Week.

MTSU alumna Connie Cathcart-Richardson is one of the creative forces behind the annual event.

YOUNG INNOVATOR

Sarah Turner, a Nutrition and Food Science major, got real-world experience at the corporate level at Cracker Barrel during a recent summer internship where she helped design a new dinner menu nutrition guide, allergen grids, and a kids' nutrition guide.

The experience introduced her to the unacquainted side of the nutrition world, such as calculating menu calories and detecting allergens that can be harmful to customers.

She also learned Food and Drug Administration restaurant rounding rules, elements of plate appearance and how that affects customer perception, and food cost analysis that is a vital part of running a corporate restaurant chain with over 600 locations nationwide.

Turner credits her teachings from MTSU faculty who kept her current on the latest nutrition news and skills she learned in MTSU's Innovation Kitchen.

Throughout the week, students are front row to the latest trends and also have a chance to meet up-and-coming designers and network with numerous industry professionals.

A report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics found that "Nashville has the largest concentration of fashion businesses per capita in the United States outside of Los Angeles and New York City."

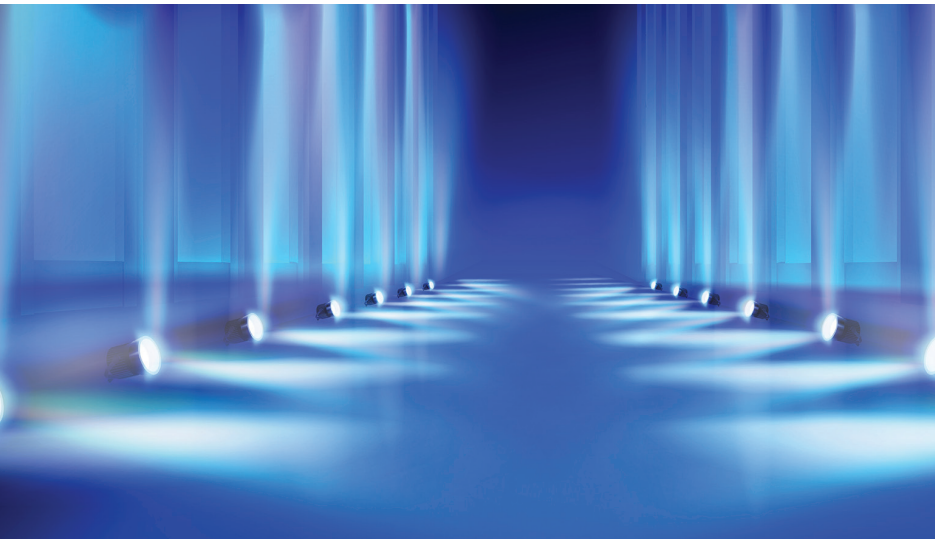
MTSU boasts one of the relatively few Apparel Design degree programs in the Southeast and one of the best. The program blends a flair for fashion with practical knowledge of all aspects of the business. Students who have a talent for drawing and creating clothes, for themselves or others, can apply their creativity in classes designed to expand their knowledge of the practical side of the multibillion-dollar fashion industry.



HIT THE RUNWAY

Local residents feel transported to a fashion runway in France during the annual fashion show by the MTSU Textiles, Merchandising, and Design (TXMD) program.

The TXMD's annual Fashion Show is fully organized and produced by the Fashion Promotion class—from fundraising to wardrobe selection, modeling, hair and makeup, staging and music, and publicity.



Leave a Legacy at MTSU

**You can make a difference, outright or through
your estate plan, at your University.**

Did you know you can even pre-designate areas or programs you'd like your gift to benefit?

Consult an attorney, but the language often can be as simple as:
"I hereby give, devise and bequeath to Middle Tennessee State University Foundation
the sum of ____ or the property described as ____ or ____% of my estate."

Contact Development Director Kristin Wells for more information:
Kristin.Wells@mtsu.edu or 615-898-2417